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Hamas-Run Gaza Health Ministry Admits to Flaws in Casualty Data

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Latest Developments

The Hamas-run Gaza Ministry of Health **said** on April 6 that it had "incomplete data" for 11,371 of the 33,091 Palestinian fatalities it claims to have documented. In a statistical report, the ministry notes that it considers an individual record to be incomplete if it is missing any of the following key data points: identity number, full name, date of birth, or date of death. The health ministry also **released** a report on April 3 that acknowledged the presence of incomplete data but did not define what it meant by "incomplete." In that earlier report, the ministry acknowledged the incompleteness of 12,263 records. It is unclear why, after just three more days, the number fell to 11,371 — a decrease of more than 900 records.

Prior to its admissions of incomplete data, the health ministry **asserted** that the information in more than 15,000 fatality records had stemmed from "reliable media sources." However, the ministry never identified the sources in question and Gaza has no independent media.

Expert Analysis

"The sudden shifts in the ministry's reporting methods suggest it is scrambling to prevent exposure of its shoddy work. For months, U.S. media have taken for granted that the ministry's top-line figure for casualties was reliable enough to include in daily updates on the war. Even President Biden has cited its numbers. Now we're seeing that a third or more of the ministry's data may be incomplete at best — and fictional at worst." — ***David Adesnik**, Senior Fellow and Director of Research*

"It is important to recognize that Hamas is deeply invested in shaping the narrative that emerges from Gaza, particularly regarding the number of casualties in the war. Moreover, this control of data extends beyond the statistics provided by the Hamas-controlled health ministry, as there is also a deliberate effort to downplay the number of terrorists who have been killed by Israel in the war, potentially numbering more than 10,000." — ***Joe Truzman**, Senior Research Analyst at FDD's Long War Journal*

A Record of False Claims

On October 16, the health ministry **told** global media that an Israeli airstrike was responsible for an explosion that killed 500 Palestinians at the Al Ahli Arab Hospital in northern Gaza. U.S. media quickly **reported** the story even though it became clear **within hours** there was no evidence to support claims of an airstrike or a death toll close to 500. Soon, evidence **emerged** showing that a rocket fired by Palestinian terrorists was nearly certain to have caused a blast in the hospital's parking lot. An unclassified U.S. intelligence report on October 18 **said** the blast likely **caused** between 100 to 300 deaths, and it leaned towards casualty estimates at "the low end of the 100-to-300 spectrum."

Nevertheless, the health ministry does not identify the individuals who died as a result of errant Palestinian fire, even though the Israel Defense Forces **reported** that 12 percent of rockets fired during the first month of the war fell inside Gaza — more than 1,000 total misfires.

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